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NOTES AND NEWS.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN has now a first-rate opportunity of showing that his speeches about Imperialism are something more than mere sound and fury. The fate of some two hundred British Indian merchants in the Transvaal lies in his hands. We endeavour elsewhere to indicate a way out of the present difficulty. And if Mr. Chamberlain cannot see his way to putting pressure upon President Kruger without at the same time putting pressure upon our own colonies, so much the better.

The Bengal Government is anxious above all things to strengthen the European element in the Calcutta municipality, and such European newspapers as the *Pioneer* and the *Englishman* strongly approve. But nevertheless it is a matter which requires more than even a new Act can be sure of effecting. In a recent number of INDIA some general reasons were given why prominent members of the European community—men in haste to become rich and leave the country for ever—were disinclined to join the municipality and were not very regular in their attendance even if they could be induced to become members. The *Bengalee* now brings to the support of these conclusions some pertinent facts regarding the relations of the municipality and the European citizens. All along the Government has been anxious to make the way smooth for European commissioners. By the Act of 1876 the European wards were allotted three members while the Indian wards had only two. But the Europeans it was found in many cases would not stand for election. Then, under the Act of 1888, still further to facilitate their admission, representation was granted to the Chamber of Commerce, the Ports Trust, etc., but with very much the same result, the Chamber of Commerce in some cases returning Indians. Now, by the new Bill, the coy European is to be tempted by fees for attendance not exceeding Rs. 48 a week, and the Chamber of Commerce complains that this is not enough. The Calcutta Municipality is to be reformed by displacing active and willing members by others immersed in their own affairs and only induced to join with the greatest difficulty.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* thinks that the attitude of Sir John Woodburn towards the Municipal Bill "is not likely to damp but to raise the spirit of the citizens of Calcutta"; but it insists on the necessity of obtaining positive proof, which the most unscrupulous supporter of the Bill cannot gainsay, of their strong opposition to the measure. Moreover, as such old hands as Sir Charles Elliott and Mr. Reynolds are said to consider the scheme altogether foolish, our contemporary thinks that a last attempt to convert the present Lieut.-Governor would not be entirely hopeless.

The strong protests evoked by the Viceroy's tour in Burma at a time when he is about to leave India, and the experience he may gain by his visit will be of no use to the country, are hardly likely to be assuaged by the defence which Lord Elgin has lately offered. According to the *Madras Standard*, his Excellency remarked: "The tours that a Viceroy makes are an essential part of his duties, not the least important object being to afford her Majesty's subjects opportunities for the manifestation of loyalty to the throne." It is objected that the tour is both useless and costly, and the answer is that it is an essential part of the Viceroy's duties, and that it is useful because it gives opportunities for manifestations of loyalty. It might be thought nothing was so likely to make such manifestations hollow and misleading as the impression that they were made at a great expense on an occasion which could have no other utility to the country. But Lord Elgin apparently does not mind making loyalty an expensive virtue.

Some reforms are contemplated by the Punjab Government in the administration of civil justice: the strengthening of the divisional at the expense of the district courts, the extension of the jurisdiction of special small cause courts in the hands of selected munsiffs, and the raising of the amount in dispute which will allow of an appeal to the chief court. The *Tribune* warmly supports the second of these proposals, believing that it will cheapen justice, and defends the munsiffs from an attack by the district judge of Ferozepore, who curiously enough finds that the munsiff of his own court is very satisfactory though all the others are chargeable with "incompetence and disintegrity." As to the third proposal, the *Tribune* views it unfavourably. The pressure on the chief court is no doubt great, but this results from the confidence felt in its administration of justice and the mistrust inspired by some of the lower courts. The natural cure for the difficulty would be to strengthen the chief court by adding to the number of judges. But that would mean money, and the want of money is the standing difficulty of our government of India.

We have already called attention to the valuable articles which have been appearing in the *Tribune* on the administration of criminal justice in the Punjab. Our contemporary follows up its exposure of illegal flogging and the reintroduction of slavery under the guise of requiring sureties for good behaviour by drawing attention to two other points—the use made of the criminal courts as a means of intimidation and the temptation to which magistrates are exposed not to dismiss cases even when the enquiry has been favourable to the accused. As to the first the judges of the chief court observe "that magistrates are too ready to issue process and often aid—unintentionally—complainants in making the criminal courts a means of intimidation." As to the second point the sessions judge at Delhi says:—

> Some magistrates commit to throw the responsibility on the sessions judge of acquitting the accused rather than themselves get into disfavour with the police.

Magistrates are also accused by the district magistrate at Ludhiana of issuing process "in order to show a modicum of decided cases at the end of the month." Incidentally the judges of the chief court remark on the ignorance of some of the inferior magistrates as a cause of the miscarriage of justice. There is, as the *Tribune* says, "no lack of educated and competent Indians who are eating their hearts out for want of suitable employment"; but educated Indians are not always in favour with the powers that be. Are we to suppose that the authorities even prefer the miscarriage of justice?

Some time ago we drew attention to the views of Mr. Whish, of the Indian Civil Service, on police reform. A recent utterance of his in the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* lends additional interest to a case now being investigated. Animadverting on the practice of judging an officer's work by statistical tests, Mr. Whish says:—"Not only are existing offences handled under conditions in which the punishment of *the real offender* is a comparatively unimportant object, but crime is actually manufactured." The *Mahratta* gives a lengthy account of a charge of fabricating and suppressing evidence which has

been brought against Police-Inspector Dullekhan. On June 22 last, a boy of fifteen was convicted of the murder of his uncle at Kale, and sentenced to death by the Satara Sessions Judge, the conviction being afterwards affirmed by the High Court. It is said that the gaol authorities began to suspect that there had been a miscarriage of justice. At all events when a petition was presented to the Government, Mr. Brewin was despatched to Kale to investigate. It appeared that at first the local police had been unable to fix the guilt on anyone, but as soon as Dullekhan appeared everything became plain. It is reported that Mr. Brewin has suspended this officer. The capital sentence on the boy had already been commuted to one of transportation for life. The further progress of the case will be watched with interest, for the matter can hardly rest where it is.

Another charge against police officials is reported from Bombay. Between nine and ten o'clock on the morning of November 11, Pandoo Withoo was arrested and taken to the Bazaar Gate Police Station. Between eleven and twelve he was taken out dead. His body was conveyed to the Goculdass Tejpal Hospital with a letter saying that he had been found on the road very ill, and had died on the way to the hospital. Before the coroner this letter was corroborated by witnesses, and permission was given for the body to be burned. It is now alleged that the deceased was assaulted shortly after he was taken to the Police Station. Jemadar Roshan Mahomed Barri is charged with culpable homicide, while Inspector Jolliffe, who was not present at the time, is accused of having attempted afterwards to hush the matter up.

In our issue of Oct. 28 (INDIA, p. 226), we reproduced from the *Mahratta* the wretched story of the case of Mr. H. H. Ambler, and commented on the trial. It will be remembered that Ambler was accused of kicking a peon named Jugadeo who died an hour or two afterwards; that a European jury brought in a unanimous verdict of not guilty, but convicted him of causing grievous hurt; and that the judge fined Ambler Rs. 10, and let him off with the sham "imprisonment" of four hours till the court rose. We are glad to see that there may be some remedy for such a scandal. In the Calcutta High Court on Nov. 18, Justices Stevens and Pratt decided that a rule should issue on the Judicial Commissioner of Manbhum to show cause why a re-trial should not be had, or why the sentence should not be enhanced, or such other order be passed as the circumstances of the case demand. Such cases merit the keenest attention of the High Court to the end that the minds of the people be disabused of the unhappy idea that justice is not to be had by a Native in a criminal case against a European.

With reference to the light sentence (nine months' imprisonment) passed on the soldier who shot the helpless boy in the Poonamallee case, the *Hindu Patriot* writes:—"We are not blood-thirsty, but justice is justice, and in the present case there appears to have been a lamentable failure of justice. It is of course difficult to divine what motive Knight could have had in shooting a poor helpless boy. But there have been several instances of Natives being shot by European soldiers out of pure wantonness and without any intelligible motive whatever."

Principal Fairbairn, as was to be expected, had barely set foot on Indian soil when he found the right hand of friendship and hospitality held out to him. On the occasion of his first lecture on the philosophy of religion Mr. Tata gave a reception in his honour. Mr. Justice Ranade expressed the good wishes of his compatriots, hoping that Dr. Fairbairn would be successful in making the influence of Western thought and culture felt in the East, and that he would be no less successful in disseminating on his return home a knowledge of Eastern thought among his own countrymen. The situation could hardly have been more delicately and finely put. Dr. Fairbairn, with well-deserved compliments to Mr. Tata's enlightened and munificent support to educational measures, while not forgetting that "East is East and West is West," remarked that in the existing political circumstances all distinctions should be done away with and England and India should be united in one common tie which no events should be able to sever. A pious aspiration and a worthy hope. It is for Englishmen to begin.

Whatever may be thought of his other theories, Mr. Kidd's view that the Englishman can never become really acclimatised in the Tropics, which can never therefore be colonised in the proper sense of the term, has found a very general acceptance. The *British Medical Journal*, however, maintains that acclimatisation is possible, but is ably answered by the *Indian Medical Record*. One point in the controversy deserves notice. The *Journal*, which looks upon the dangers of the Tropics as consisting of microbes alone, points to the lowering of the death-rate among British soldiers in India as a result of improved sanitation, and a proof that in the future European colonisation may become possible. But it overlooks (1) the much shorter stay of the soldier in India, (2) the great number now invalided home, and (3) the care taken of the soldier in other matters besides sanitation. As the *Record* says:—

Few hot-house plants are more carefully looked after than is the British soldier in India, and the proportion of care lavished on protecting him from microbes is small compared with that which, as the result of a dearly-bought experience, is expended upon protecting him from the effects of the climate.

Lord Northbrook communicates his views on "The Alternatives before the Indian Government" in the matter of currency to the *National Review*. He points out that the question is not whether the silver standard shall be abandoned in favour of gold—for that was decided in 1893—but (1) whether sufficient reasons can be shown for reversing the policy of the last five years and reverting to silver, and (2) if the gold standard is to be established, what steps should be taken to bring it into effective operation? He concludes that "it would be wrong to revert to the silver standard," and that therefore "a gold currency seems to be essential." His arguments are anything but convincing. He places no stress on the artificial character of the fabric reared on a rupee valued at 16d. and worth intrinsically only 10½d. He is relieved of his first fears for the hardship that might be inflicted on the poorer classes in consequence of a fall in the value of ornaments. How? By Sir Antony MacDonnell's evidence that "the greater part" of the savings of the people of the North-Western Provinces are not kept in ornaments, but in rupees; and by a similar statement as to the people of Behar. Surely these grounds are seriously inadequate.

Mr. Lloyd said recently that "by forcing up the rupee the Indian Government is carrying out a wholesale system of confiscation which has not been witnessed before elsewhere in the world in a time of peace under a civilised Government." Lord Northbrook corrects Mr. Lloyd, pointing out that the Indian Government did not "force up the rupee." "All that was done by the closing of the mints," he explains, "was to endeavour to prevent the gold value of the rupee from falling lower than 1s. 4d., which was about the average of the five years immediately preceding." We should not have believed this were it not that the words lie plainly before our eyes. It is not difficult on such principles of argument to reach the comfortable conclusion that "there is no foundation for the allegation that taxation has been increased by closing the mints to silver"—a conclusion that will be sufficiently astonishing to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. Where is the use of a historical review to show the prevalence of gold coins in India in bygone days, or to recall the desire for a gold standard only a quarter of a century back, when the circumstances have meanwhile altered so materially? Sir David Barbour has admitted that the country is not fit for a gold currency. If the only alternative lay in intolerable taxation, one's choice would readily be made; but surely Lord Northbrook can see other alternatives—say in restriction of war expenditure, and in more considerate internal administration. "The change of standard," says Lord Northbrook, "is a very serious financial operation, for the success of which it is necessary that the Government of India should be in a strong financial position; fortunately this is the case now, because a considerable surplus is expected this year." But is the financial position "strong"? And if it is, does that fact not obviate the difficulty to be met by a gold standard?

Strongly in contrast with this incomprehensible weakness of Lord Northbrook's are the two "statements submitted to the Indian Currency Committee of 1898" by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. We have already commented on some of the main contentions therein advanced, and we recommend them to Lord Northbrook's serious consideration.

Mr. Dadabhai declares that the closing of the mints "was illegal, dishonourable, and a despotic act," which, by "raising the true rupee, worth at present about 11d. in gold, to a false rupee to be worth 16d. in gold, is a covert exaction of about 45 per cent. more taxation all round from the Indian taxpayers," while it increases official salaries to a like extent, and gives a like advantage to creditors over debtors, the latter being of course the poorer classes. We have already followed in detail the argument here advanced, and we now content ourselves with recommending the study of it in full in Mr. Dadabhai's own exposition. The continuous reference to State papers will also be found to be exceedingly effective, and to throw a strange light on the muddled action of the authorities. Mr. Dadabhai takes care to point out the real source of the mischief: "India," in Lord Salisbury's words, "must be bled" under a system of "political hypocrisy." And as to the right cure:—

Now with regard to the immediate position—What is to be done now? Retrace the false step of 1893, taken in spite of the clear warnings of the Treasury and others, and against the "law of Nature." The opening of the mints to the unrestricted coining of silver will correct all the mischievous results that have flowed from the closing of the mints. And further, the true remedy, as pointed out by the Treasury, is a reduction of expenditure and readjustment of establishments.

In "Statement II" Mr. Dadabhai deals with the Blue-book containing the evidence before the Currency Committee. He draws a distinction and marks a lamentable contrast between two Indias—the prosperous India of the British and other foreigners, and the poverty-stricken India of the Indians. Turning to the "indebtedness of India," he contends that "in reality there is not a single farthing of 'indebtedness' from India to England." On the contrary, "it is England that is under a very vast material and moral debt to India."

Besides the sum of Rs. 400,000,000 now drained from India every year, (1) the British Indian is built up at the *entire* expense of India and mainly with Indian blood. Even now Indian blood is contributing in extending the British empire and benefits in other parts of the world. And what a reward—a helotry! (2) Not only this, but in addition to the cost of building up the whole Indian empire, England has taken away from India an amount of wealth since its connexion with India which, with ordinary commercial compound interest, will amount to thousands and thousands of millions sterling.

This statement must be read in the light of Mr. Dadabhai's explanations. We would also draw attention to his discussion of the balance of trade, his caustic remarks on "surpluses and solvency," his examination of the question of hoarding, not to mention other points of minor importance arising on the evidence. It is to be anticipated now that Mr. Dadabhai will have the opportunity of thrashing out all these points before the Currency Committee.

Of the troubles and difficulties produced by the "forward" policy there is no end. The Waziri raids into Afghanistan, of which a good deal has been heard lately, may at first sight appear to be in no wise the concern of the Indian Government. But unfortunately the Waziris (thanks to Sir Henry Fowler) are nominally under British authority. It is true that we can exercise no real control over them. While we have established posts to keep the peace on the northern, eastern, and southern frontiers of Waziristan, the western is too far removed for us to watch effectively. Accordingly we cannot check the Waziri raids into Afghanistan unless we send forth an expedition for that purpose. But, as the *Pioneer* points out, the Amír of Afghanistan is unable under the Durand agreement to send a punitive expedition into the country; so that we are in the unpleasant position of having become responsible for a people whom we cannot control, with the possibility of having to choose between a costly expedition into western Waziristan or a serious disagreement with the Amír of Afghanistan.

An Anglo-Indian correspondent writes: "Quite recently the *Daily Chronicle* touched on a large and (of late) complicated subject, concisely stating the text in the following sentence:—'For upwards of seventy years England has more or less desired an approach to India through the Mesopotamian Valley, and there are dozens of Blue-books recording Commissions from 1839 down to the last attempt in 1890 to obtain a concession for even a part of the way from the Persian Gulf in the direction of Diarbekir.' This long debated conception of an 'overland' route all the way to India has to be regarded from these main points of view: (1) engineering; (2) commerce, which includes finance; and (3) politics. The last is the least important though recently it has claimed most notice. This is mainly because of the atmosphere of diplomatic intrigue and international rivalry in which we live nowadays. The paragraph to which I refer relates to a case in point. It is said that 'the Germans have succeeded in thrusting a wedge between Persia on one side and Turkey on the other . . . . which cuts across the only possible line of the Mesopotamian system' as previously planned for approach to Bagdad. This is all that need be said here as regards the political geography of the new scheme which is very clearly sketched by the *Chronicle* for those who will take down an atlas to read it by. But these political aspects of the problem are all very vague and of little practical moment. Whenever financiers are found capable of commanding the many millions required for what must at best be a very speculative enterprise, and when masterly engineers are found to work out the alignment and actual cost, it will be soon enough to go into the project seriously. We have of late years had a series of imaginative schemes of the sort which are as attractive and for this purpose as futile as works of fiction. Broadly speaking, it may be said that the whole conception stands much as it was left by General Chesney and his coadjutors fifty years ago. Finance, including the question of net returns, was and remains the rock, or rather the desert, ahead. It was seen that either Imperial funds or some very substantial guarantees are the first step required, and in spite of the vain attempts to show that India can or should be laid under contribution that initial step has yet to be confronted.

"Curiously enough the essential issue in this problem in its wider aspect of what may be described as the dynamics of traffic and transport was stated quite independently a week or two ago by two very different authorities—Lord Curzon and Mr. J. M. Maclean. Though the latter was chiefly concerned with 'approaches to India,' they both, taking large views, extended their vision to the overland trade with China and the far East. No longer content to dawdle about Mesopotamia the member for Cardiff demands that we shall stretch forth our hands, not in defiance to, but in alliance with the grand railway-making power of Russia. Casting scorn on the blind policy of the 'forward' party who have alienated our otherwise cheap defenders, and on the policy of keeping Afghanistan isolated, Mr. Maclean would drive railways through all those regions, the Hindu Kush and the Pamirs included, until the now fraternal Russians shall through Samarkand link on their Siberian lines with our Indian railway system. Then, as incentive for us to push on with world-spanning iron net-work, he asserted that when it is completed to far Cathay we shall see the produce of China carried overland to eastern and northern Europe. By way of set-off to that Mr. Maclean clinched the railway exploiting passage in his speech with the reproachful query, 'how long are we to wait for our railway from Calais to Calcutta?'

"Now let us turn to the other authority in comparison regarding heavy transport by land or by sea, the Viceroy-designate. In the course of his last public speech before his departure he said:—

There used to exist a short time ago a school of opinion—and he dared say it existed still—who believed that in the last resort India could only be defended by land communication and by vast trunk railways. He had never been inclined to that view, having always held that if the British soldier had to be sent to India he must be sent by sea, and it was to the improvement of our steam services and the maintenance of our unquestionable supremacy in the Mediterranean, and the retention of the use of the Suez Canal, that we must look to for the defence of India rather than to any speculative schemes such as he had sometimes seen sketched in the Press.

There 'used to exist'! This was said a week before the member for Cardiff, nothing doubting, showed that this 'school of opinion still exists.' But where is that school now when it can be so easily set aside by a wave of the new Viceregal hand? Lord Curzon's eulogists, amid all their guesses at his future greatness, had not discovered that he could on occasions rise to the quality of a first-class consulting engineer. But he does so in this instance; for his lordship was wiser than he knew in thus compendiously demonstrating the immense superiority of sea-borne traffic over land transport through long distances with its inevitable impediments of friction and cruel cost."

A WAY OUT IN THE TRANSVAAL.

WHEN one speaks of British Indians as one's fellow-subjects have the words any relation to facts? That is the question which is likely to force itself upon any Englishman who reads over the official "papers relating to the grievances of her Majesty's Indian subjects in the South African Republic." Lord George Hamilton in his letter of November 29 to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji expressed his regret "that the efforts made to improve the *status* of British Indian settlers in South Africa have not been as successful as he could wish." That seems a curiously inverted way of describing what has happened. The *status* of British Indian settlers in the Transvaal at any rate was quite free from objection in 1884 under the Convention of London. But it has since been frittered away, and their rights and property are threatened with confiscation and destruction through the continuous slackness, indifference, and compliance of the Colonial Office. We should like to know what "efforts" Lord George Hamilton or anybody else connected with the Government of India has made not so much to improve the *status* of British Indian settlers as to prevent their ruin. There is so far as we can discover no available evidence of any such "efforts." On the contrary the India Office appears to have stood by, if not smiling approval at least helplessly acquiescing, while the Colonial Office squandered with a lavish hand the legal rights and the commercial assets of a numerous class of British Indian merchants whom Mr. Chamberlain, in his despatch of September 4, 1895, to Sir H. Robinson, speaks of as "a peaceable, law-abiding and meritorious body of persons" of "undoubted industry and intelligence, and indomitable perseverance." Let us glance rapidly once more at the successive stages of this great betrayal. Article 14 of the Convention of London (1884) provided that "all persons, other than natives, conforming themselves to the laws of the South African Republic" should have full liberty to reside and to carry on commerce either in person or by agents in any part of the Republic. Within a few months of the execution of this Convention the Government of the Transvaal conveyed to Sir Hercules Robinson, our High Commissioner in South Africa, its desire to "deal with" Indian coolies and other Asiatics. Instead of pointing out at once that Indian coolies were British subjects Sir Hercules Robinson sent the proposal home to Lord Derby with the suggestion that for the words "other than natives" in Article 14, the words "other than African natives or Indian or Chinese coolie immigrants" should be substituted. This was the first false step. And the second was taken when Lord Derby notified the willingness of the home Government to amend the Convention in the way proposed, while he added that it would be "more correct" for the Volksraad to legislate upon the matter. The new legislation secured to the Transvaal Government the right of pointing out locations to all Asiatics. This drastic proposal naturally led to complaints, and the Colonial Office went so far as to suggest a revision of the law. But—and this was the third false step—it seems to have accepted a not very different law in 1886 on the ground that it was necessary "for the sake of the public health." This law enabled the Transvaal Government "for sanitary purposes" to point out certain locations to Asiatics "for habitation." Thereupon the question arose whether "habitation" includes a man's business premises as well as the place where he sleeps. This question involved the fortunes of every Indian trader in the Transvaal, for of course a man cannot carry on a successful business in a swamp three miles out of town, though he may consent to pass the night there. Yet the Colonial Office cheerfully submitted this fundamental matter to arbitration and as cheerfully accepted the arbitrator's award though it merely evaded the point at issue.

This stage in the controversy was reached before Mr. Chamberlain went to the Colonial Office, and according to his own account he is bound by the blunders of his predecessors save only that he may make, if he has not already made, "friendly representations" to the South African Republic to invite it to consider whether in its own interests it would not do better to treat the Indians "more generously." But is this really the case? Is there no way out of the difficulty short of appealing to the generosity of President Kruger? We are disposed to think that there is, and that too without retracing many of the false steps which have been taken. The original blunder, as we have seen, arose from the readiness of Sir Hercules Robinson and Lord Derby to assent to a revised interpretation of the term "natives" in Article 14 of the Convention of London. This was the more inexcusable as Article 26 of the Convention of Pretoria, for which Article 14 of the London Convention was substituted, expressly saved the rights of all "the subjects of her Majesty conforming themselves to the laws, etc." Still the Colonial Office threw over the Indian coolies when it assented to legislation in 1885, and from that assent it would no doubt be extremely difficult to retreat. But the next blunder was to throw over not merely the coolies but also any Indian residents in the Transvaal whom the Government might, for sanitary purposes, think it desirable to restrict to certain locations for residence. One would like to know upon what sort of evidence, if any, the Colonial Office was persuaded of the necessity of this restriction on sanitary grounds. At all events there is no such evidence cited in the Blue-book and the Indians themselves, so soon as the matter was brought to their notice, were able to adduce a good deal of medical evidence to the contrary effect. But here again it must be admitted, however reluctantly, that the Colonial Office assented to legislation. The question for Mr. Chamberlain, it seems to us, is how the rights and property of the Indian traders can now be protected without going behind legislation approved, however ignorantly and carelessly, by the Colonial Office. The answer to that question is not far to seek. The Indian traders, in the petition which we printed on November 11, pointed out that the amended law of 1885 provided that the Government of the Transvaal should have the right to fix places of residence for Asiatics but in no way restricted the rights of Asiatics to trade. Mr. Chamberlain in his letter of November 7, referring to this document said that the petitioners appeared "to ignore the history of the matter." Now the faculty of ignoring the obvious is sometimes, as Mr. Chamberlain is aware, rather useful in political controversy. But we cannot suppose that the signatories of this petition had deliberately overlooked so vital a set of facts. On the contrary we think that they were simply recalling Mr. Chamberlain's attention to the point which had been reached before the question was submitted to the amazing arbitration of the Chief Justice of the Orange Free State. That point was that the Government of the Transvaal had secured to itself the right "for sanitary reasons" to assign to Asiatics "definite streets, wards, and locations for habitation." The meaning of the word habitation is, one would think, obvious enough. A London merchant, for example, lives at Highgate and has business in Cornhill. A Manchester merchant lives at Fallowfield and has business in Corporation Street. The habitations of these persons are Highgate and Fallowfield—their homes, not their offices. The point would seem to be clear enough on general grounds. But in dealing with the Transvaal we are fortified further by the fact that the Convention of London, which is the root of the matter, expressly discriminates between liberty (*a*) to enter, travel, or reside, (*b*) to hire or possess houses, and (*c*) to carry on commerce. It is amazing therefore that the Colonial Office should ever have submitted the meaning of the words "for habitation" to the decision of an arbitrator especially in view of the controversy which had gone before. Still more amazing is it that the arbitration should have been decided upon without any consultation with the traders concerned, that it should have been conducted in private, and that it should have been entrusted to the Chief Justice of the Orange Free State, who no matter how great his legal attainments may be could hardly be expected to bring an unprejudiced mind to bear upon the facts.

But the decision of the arbitrator decided nothing. He was asked to decide the question whether the new law approved by the Colonial Office enabled the Transvaal to restrict Indian traders to certain business premises as well as to certain houses, a question which arose because the Transvaal courts had interpreted the law in that sense. Yet his award was merely that, in cases where objections were raised, the law was "subject to sole and exclusive interpretation in the ordinary course by the tribunals of the country." Moreover he was to decide the question in the light of the despatches. As the Indian traders said in their subsequent petition to the Colonial Office: "The question that was to be decided diplomatically and politic-

ally has been left, if this award is to be valid, to be decided judicially only." A material point in the diplomatic and political decision for which the question was transferred from the Courts to an arbitrator was the validity of the alleged sanitary reasons which, and which alone, had induced the Colonial Office to assent to the amended legislation. There can be no doubt that this pretence, if not fraudulent, was at all events false. The arbitrator indeed in his statement of reasons for his award, admits (section 6) that the petitions to the Volksraad against the Indians had dwelt specially upon "the detrimental effect that would follow their being allowed to trade in competition with whites." And the arbitrator not only suggests in his statement (section 49) that the law is reasonable "independently of sanitary reasons," but in the preliminary proceedings (Blue-book p. 12), when there had been an argument upon the point whether oral testimony should be taken, he said that "the mere opinions of different persons upon the sanitary necessity or otherwise for the removal of Indian shops would have little or no weight with him." This observation, read in the light of very many passages in his statement of reasons as well as the terms of his award, suggests that he approached his task with a somewhat odd conception of its nature. Now it is no doubt a very grave step to go behind the award of an arbitrator, and a step which in almost any conceivable case we should be among the last to defend. The point is whether this is not precisely one of the very rare cases in which such a course is not only defensible but even commendable, and that for two reasons: (*a*) because the award was no award at all, and (*b*) because while the arbitrator ignored one essential question—namely, whether a man's place of business is truly described as his habitation when he lives in a separate house—he refrained from opening the other essential question—namely, whether the alleged sanitary reasons on the strength of which alone the Colonial Office was persuaded to tolerate a law admittedly inconsistent with the Convention of London were or were not of the nature of a false pretence. It is because we believe these reasons to be sufficient that we earnestly appeal to Mr. Chamberlain to find a way out of the present unjust and intolerable situation by returning to the unfettered interpretation of the law of 1886—in other words by insisting that an Indian in the Transvaal may be restricted only as regards his place of residence, and only then for sanitary reasons proved in each particular case. The Transvaal Government, in the statement which it submitted to the "arbitrator," asserted that the letter of Article 14 of the Convention of London did not entirely agree with the intention of the parties. That is an argument which cuts both ways. If on the ground of mistake the Transvaal Government was permitted by us to go behind the Convention of London, is it unreasonable for us to go behind an arbitrator's award which, as has been seen, evaded the issue, and which had to do with a law approved by us only under the influence of representations now seen to have been false and misleading?

"OUR INDIAN FELLOW-SUBJECTS."

In the preceding article we have again set forth the course of treatment to which British Indian subjects in the Transvaal have been subjected during the past dozen years, and we have pointed the way whereby Mr. Chamberlain may compass their deliverance from the bondage into which they have been sunk by the systematic slackness of the Colonial Office. The treatment of British Indians in the Transvaal, however, is but one branch of a question that has very wide ramifications. In recent issues we have denounced the discrimination made against them in our own colonies not only in South Africa but also in Australia, and not only with respect to their dwelling places and business places but also with respect to their mere bodily presence in colonial territory. The Queen's gracious Proclamation of 1858, the *Magna Carta* of the Indians, promised in the most solemn language equality of treatment to every one of the Queen's Indian subjects, and the political and social effects of that wise and generous declaration are beyond all estimation. Are they now to be undone? Are they to be discovered to be mere Dead Sea fruit, turning to earth and bitterness in the mouth? Here is a passage from the *Standard and Diggers' News* (Aug. 13, 1898):—

> The axiom of the Government of India is that, wherever a white citizen of the British Empire can go, there the brown subject of the Empire is entitled to enter. This most fatal policy—as short-sighted as the negrophilist policy of the early part of the century—must be combated and defeated, or no peace is possible in the British Empire when Canada, Australia, Rhodesia, and Natal alike protest against this most unwarrantable assumption.

To judge from the action not merely of the Transvaal but of our own self-governing colonies their leading men agree with this writer that the solemn promise of the Queen, the very idea of empire itself, the very essence of humanity, is based on a "most unwarrantable assumption." Their legislative action, followed out on a common understanding (so far at least as the Australian Colonies are concerned, according to the Victorian Solicitor-General) inevitably raises the astounding question: "Are Indians, after all, really our fellow-subjects?"

Look around South Africa. In Zululand and Rhodesia the Indian trader simply has no chance at all. He cannot go into these reserves without a license, and the authorities will not as a rule give him a license on practicable conditions. In Melmoth township in Zululand the existing Indians own £2,000 worth of property; but in the townships of Nondweni and Etchowe they cannot own or acquire land. In Natal the Indian has been the subject of prolonged and multifarious legislation. There is no legislature in South Africa more anxious than the Natal Imperialists for a combined front against the Indian, notwithstanding that it is Indian labour that has made Natal "the garden of South Africa." As Mr. Chamberlain says about his Indian memorialists, the Natal legislators have overlooked the history of this question. They choose to forget that in 1860, when in the words of one honourable member of the Legislative Assembly "the progress and almost the existence of the colony hung in the balance," the authorities decided upon assisting immigration from India; and they forget that "Indian immigration brought prosperity, prices rose, and people were no longer content to grow or sell produce for a song." Look on 1860 and then look on 1897. In 1897 Natal passed no fewer than four Acts undisguisedly intended to prevent unindentured Indians from obtaining permanent or even temporary employment in the colony. First: an exceptionally severe quarantine law, professedly against contagious disease, really against immigration. Second: an Act "to place restrictions on immigrants" by securing in practice the prohibition of Indian immigration while formally applying the innocent-looking test of requiring the application for admission to be written and signed by the Indian newcomer in a European language. Third: an Act "to amend the law relating to licenses to wholesale and retail dealers" which places the right of granting or refusing licenses in the hands of an officer appointed by the town councils or boards representing the very classes most keenly opposed to Indian competition, with no right of appeal, and under the further requirement that the applicant keep his books in the English language. Fourth: an Act relating to "the question of passes" which has caused infinite annoyance, and subjected well-to-do Indian traders to the ignominy of arrest and detention without right either of appeal or of compensation.

True, the Natal Immigration Restriction Act, 1897, will admit an Indian even if he cannot write out his application in a European language, but then he must deposit £100, which will be returned to him if he comes up to the mark within one week, but will be forfeited if he does not. In 1894, when there were only 251 Indian voters as against nearly 10,000 Europeans, the Natal Government brought in a Bill practically disfranchising Indians on a ridiculous cry that Indians might swamp the legislature. Lord Ripon put his foot on that, and then a circumlocutory arrangement was devised which for aught we know is still worrying Mr. Chamberlain. The Cape is not quite so bad, so far as formal legislation goes, though its Native Locations Acts have an expression that may be worked similarly against the Indians: "being Kafirs, Fingoes, Basutos, Hottentots, Bushmen, *and the like*." The East London Municipality has been authorised to frame by-laws prohibiting Indians from walking on the footpaths, and compelling them to live in specified locations, which as a rule are unhealthy swamps unfit for human habitation and obviously useless for trade. But the spirit of oppression is there. And, generally, let

us repeat Mr. G. P. Pillai's summary of Mr. M. K. Gandhi's statement of the case against South Africa:—

In South Africa we are not permitted to travel without a pass, we are not allowed to walk about in the night, we are consigned to locations, we are denied admission to the first and second classes on railways, we are driven out of tramcars, we are pushed off footpaths, we are kept out of hotels, we are refused the benefits of the public paths [? baths], we are spat upon, we are hissed, we are cursed, we are hated, we are abused, and we are subjected to a variety of other indignities which no human being can patiently endure.

Such is the practical outcome of the conception of British Imperialism in South Africa.

As for the Australian Colonies, we need not linger over them, seeing that we dealt at length with Victoria so recently as November 25 (INDIA, p. 281), and Victoria is simply following on the lines of New South Wales and Western Australia. There is no earthly need for any such legislation in Victoria except to keep in line with the sister colonies. Nor is there any real need in them for anti-Indian legislation except to check the clamour of small traders whose jealousy is the main cause of the oppression of the Indians. In New South Wales the Coloured Races Restriction and Regulation Act, 1896, applied the provisions of the Chinese Restriction and Regulation Act, 1888, to "all persons belonging to any coloured race inhabiting the continent of Asia or the continent of Africa." But, it is worth noting, neither Act is to apply to "ministers of religion, missionaries, native teachers, tourists, merchants, men of science or students, and the wives and families of such persons, and also their domestic servants, who are bearers of certificates of identity specifying their occupation and their object in coming into New South Wales, or of other similar documents issued by the Government whose subjects they are." Still such persons would be qualified to enter even Natal, so that practically there is no difference of restriction. "For the purpose of all proceedings under this Act"—that is to say, now, both Acts—"the stipendiary or police magistrate or justice may decide, upon his own view and judgment, whether any person produced before them is a Chinese"—or Indian—"within the meaning of this Act." The oppressive mode of operation of such Acts can be plainly seen from the evidence given before the Victorian Committee. The similarity of the various Acts in the various colonies shows beyond any question the working out of a common purpose of exclusion and restriction against the Indian.

Now what, we ask, does all this mean?—all this harrying of the Indian on entry to a British colony, on the position of his house and his place of business in the colony, and even here and there on his political *status*. Why are these men lied against, vilified, and persecuted? Do all our colonies agree with the Attorney-General of Natal "to keep the Indian for ever a hewer of wood and a drawer of water"? Or with another Natalian legislator, "to make the Indian's life more comfortable in his native land than in the colony of Natal" or elsewhere? Apparently they do. Why? The bottom ground, beyond denial, is contemptible trade jealousy; and that works upon candidates for and holders of legislative place and power. But how does this action square with the imperial pride of Britain? If English colonists adopt this attitude, surely there need be no surprise if Boers better the example. More than that, the question takes us back to the overbearing attitude of Englishmen—especially official Englishmen—to Indians in India. These set the bad example to the colonists and to the world. We put it seriously to the British elector whether such a course of combined and studied insult to Indians is not calculated to exercise the most dangerous influence upon the Indian Empire.

THE LAWLESSNESS OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

By E. H. Pickersgill, M.P.

BOTH in the House of Commons and in the columns of this journal attention has frequently been directed to the impatience of legal restrictions which has unhappily characterised the action of the governing authorities of India for many years. The indications of this spirit may be divided into two general classes. In the first place we have seen many attempts, most of them successful, but some happily defeated, to alter the law so as to give a free hand to the Government. The Bombay Revenue Jurisdiction Act, 1875, which took away the means of obtaining redress for the illegal exactions of fiscal officers; the Madras City Civil Court Act, 1892, which while professing to preserve the original jurisdiction of the High Court in practice withdrew large classes of causes from its jurisdiction and submitted them to a much less independent tribunal; and the recent Act to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, especially in its original form—these are only a few illustrations taken at random out of a long list which will at once recur to the mind of every person who is conversant with Indian affairs. But there is another class of instances, showing the same spirit, which have a still more odious and reprehensible character. I refer to the cases in which the Government of India has displayed an insolent and contemptuous disregard of the existing law. To this head belong the Singampatti estate case, the Koth succession case, Bhaunandpur estate case, and many others of the same kind. The seizure of the property of the Natus is a recent and notorious instance: and the arrest (which Judicial Committee avoided on appeal) on railway property within the territory of the Nizam of a person charged with an offence alleged to have been committed in British India, will not have been forgotten. But for every case in which the Government is brought to book, there are probably scores of cases in which their high-handed action is carried off with impunity. Both large means and no inconsiderable courage are required to bring an appeal against the Government even into the High Courts: and a further appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council is of course in the enormous majority of cases entirely out of the question. Hence not only all reformers interested in India, but everyone who retains the good old English feeling of respect for the law and abhorrence of lawlessness in high places, will hasten to congratulate the appellant in the case of Fischer *v.* The Secretary of State for India, which was decided by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on Saturday last. The Court, in giving judgment for the appellant with costs, declared that "the Government had been wrong throughout": and if the persons concerned are not utterly callous, they will feel the sting of their castigation all the more keenly by reason of the grave and restrained manner of the august court by which it was inflicted. The facts of the case are briefly as follows: The appellant is the owner of the village of Kondagai, which was formerly part of the zemindary of Shivaganga. Having received a transfer of this village from the proprietors of the zemindary, the present appellant applied to the Collector of Madura for a separate registration and sub-assessment of the village, in accordance with the provisions of section 8 of Regulation XXV of 1802, and of Madras Act I of 1876. The Regulation of 1802 recognises the right of proprietors of land to transfer by sale, gift or otherwise their property in the whole or in any part of the zemindaries; but at the same time it provides that such transfers shall be "*of no legal force or effect*" unless they are registered at the office of the collector. Then the Madras Act I of 1876 prescribes the procedure to be followed. It is enacted that on the application of the alienor or alienee the collector shall hold an enquiry, of which notice must be given in the *Gazette*, and also to any alienor or alienee who has not joined in the application. It is then further provided that if upon the enquiry it appears that the alienation has taken place and that all the parties to such alienation concur in applying for the separate assessment of the portion alienated, and if objection is not taken by any person interested in the estate, or being taken is disallowed by the collector the collector *shall* proceed to register the alienated portion in the name of the alienee and to apportion the assessment. Section 5 of the Act is specially important in the present case, as it provides an express remedy for any person who objects to the decision of the collector. It runs as follows:—

Any person aggrieved by the fact of the separate registration of the alienated land *may sue in a civil court* for a decree declaring that such separate registration ought not to be made.

The reader will clearly see from these citations that separate registration is a matter of private right with which the Government has no business to interfere. At the same time the interest which the Government may have in the transaction from a fiscal point of view is adequately protected by section 8 of the Act, which provides that

the Governor in Council may at any time, if it appears that there

has been fraud or material error in the apportionment of such separate assessment, cause the same to be readjusted.

In the present case the collector of Madura strictly followed the procedure prescribed by law. The proper notices were given, and the zemindar and certain persons who had obtained a lease of the zemindary lodged separate objections. Both these sets of objections were heard and disallowed, and the collector then ordered that the village should be separately registered, and fixed the peishcush at the sum of 2,757 rupees, which upon appeal by the lessees to the Board of Revenue was raised to 3,027 rupees. So far in the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council the proceedings had been regular. Now comes the extraordinary part of the story. One of the lessees wrote to the Chief Secretary to Government threatening proceedings at law, but urging the Government to exert its executive authority and so "save time and expense." The Governor in Council then communicated with the Board of Revenue, expressing strong disapproval of what had been done by the collector and intimating to the Board that they should cancel the separate registration of the village, as they had power to do under section 5 of Regulation II of 1803. The Board of Revenue replied that the proceedings of the collector were "judicial under the Act," and could not be interfered with by the Board; and they added that section 5 of Regulation II of 1803 did not apply to such a case. Thereupon the Governor in Council issued what the Judicial Committee stigmatise as a peremptory and absolutely illegal order. This order declared that "the collector's action was not judicial but purely fiscal;" that "the proceedings of the collector were wrong;" and it concluded as follows: "The collector will now be directed to cancel the separate registration of the village of Kondagai."

The action of the Government of Madras in issuing this order is absolutely without excuse. They professed to rely, as we have seen, on section 5 of Regulation II of 1803. Now that regulation is entitled "A Regulation for describing and determining the conduct to be observed by collectors in certain cases;" and section 5 runs as follows: "Collectors shall be under the immediate control of the Board of Revenue, and shall obey all orders communicated to them by the authority of that Board." Even a child would have intelligence enough to see that this regulation could not possibly apply so as to override the express provisions of the Act of 1876. Moreover, the Government of Madras cannot plead ignorance, disgraceful as that would be, for they were, as we have seen, forewarned by the Board of Revenue that their proposed action was illegal. The grave comment of the Judicial Committee is stinging indeed. "Cancellation in obedience to the illegal commands of the Government (they say) could have no more effect than cancellation made at the dictation of a lawless mob." The Government of Madras was no doubt the prime offender, but the Government at home cannot escape without censure. Let me quote again from the judgment of the Judicial Committee:—

Mr. Cohen very properly and very wisely admitted that he could not justify the action of the Government. That frank admission relieves us from the duty of commenting on what took place in terms which otherwise the occasion would require. At the same time we cannot help observing that it would have been better if the Government had been wise in time, and had recalled their order without suit instead of trying to shelter themselves on technical grounds and under a dilatory plea.

Lastly, this case throws a most disquieting light upon the manner in which the acts of the Government are regarded by the High Court of Madras. I take the following quotation from the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council:—

The order made by the Government was upheld in the Court of First Instance. With that judgment before them the Judges of the High Court said nothing in approval or condemnation. They passed the matter by as one of "the many difficult questions" dealt with by the Courts below which in their view it was "not necessary to decide or discuss" in order to determine the rights of the parties. But the rights of the parties depended on the validity of the Government order, and on nothing else. It was the beginning and the end of the controversy.

CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK.

THURSDAY, December 8.—A large and representative conference at Westminster Palace Hotel passed resolutions declaring that the present system of urban rating is unjust in principle; that ground landlords should contribute to local taxation in proportion to the capital value of their land; that a separate quinquennial valuation should be made of sites as distinct from buildings, and a rate levied so as to fall on the owners of land thus assessed; and that building land held vacant should bear a fair proportion of rates.

Speaking at Wakefield, Mr. Chamberlain said that in China British interests had so far been maintained, and that the "open door" had been strictly observed. He was unable to discover what the Opposition would have done, had they been in power, in order to preserve our interests in China as against Russia. But he held an understanding with Russia to be necessary unless serious complications were to ensue, and believed there were no insurmountable obstacles to such an arrangement—the more because the interests of Japan, Germany, and the United States were identical with ours in the matter. Next Session the Government proposed to deal, among other things, with the question of affording facilities to workmen to acquire their dwellings.

The Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation met to consider Colonel Picquart's application for a decision as to whether the charge against him should be dealt with by a military or civil tribunal, and, after hearing the judge appointed to report on the matter and the Public Prosecutor, ordered communication of all the documents relating to the case, and directed that, pending consideration of these documents, the prosecutions should be suspended. The court-martial on Colonel Picquart was, therefore, indefinitely postponed.

The Paris Commission completed the drafting of the final peace treaty between the United States and Spain. Six months were allowed for the ratification of the treaty by the Parliaments of both nations.

FRIDAY, December 9.—It was reported from Washington that the President was in favour of selling the Philippines after they had been ceded. Luzon would, however, be retained by the United States as a naval station.—A resolution was introduced in the Senate advocating negotiations for the modification of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty so as to permit the Nicaragua Canal to be constructed and owned by the United States. Some of the leading American journals advocated joint construction and ownership by the United States and Great Britain.

A St. Petersburg correspondent said that the international conference on armaments was to be reduced to a discussion of the Russian programme, probably in the latter part of next February, by the representatives of foreign countries already in St. Petersburg. There were to be no special delegates, no technical advisers, no financial or military experts. As for the programme, which was not expected to be ready for several weeks, Count Muravieff had revealed nothing of what he intended to propose; but all political questions, all technical matters, and all delicate subjects of any kind were to be strictly excluded.

A Havas Agency note issued in Paris said that the comments elicited by Sir E. Monson's recent speech showed that the Ambassador's idea had not been understood, or was not expressed with sufficient clearness. Sir E. Monson in no way wished to mix himself up in the internal affairs of France, or to judge her policy, for he was not competent to do this, and it was not his *rôle*. His whole attitude, moreover, protested against any suspicion of unfriendly intention. The Paris papers, in their comments on this note, attributed it to the British Embassy.

The nomination for the seat for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool, rendered vacant by the death of Sir G. Baden-Powell, took place. Mr. D. MacIver (C.) was the only candidate nominated, and was declared duly elected.

Lord and Lady Curzon of Kedleston were entertained last night at a private farewell banquet. There was a distinguished company.

SATURDAY, December 10.—The formal signature of the treaty of peace between the United States and Spain took place in Paris.—The Washington Cabinet authorised a denial of the report that the Government was considering a sale of the Philippines.

Sir J. Gorst, M.P., delivered an address at Cambridge on "Education in Agricultural Districts." He referred to reports which proved that the chief reason for the prosperity of agriculture in foreign countries was the education of the people in all technical knowledge pertaining to their industries. If efforts were to be made to raise agricultural education in this country to something like the level of Denmark, France, or Switzerland, they had a very difficult task before them. Elementary education was the bed-rock upon which the whole of their superstructure must be built. There was no use attempting a national system of technical instruction until they had a sound system of elementary instruction upon which that could be based. Another essential was that there must be some local authority. The question was very difficult; but he thought the technical instruction committees of the county councils might be developed into a very satisfactory local authority. The organisation of a proper system of continuation of higher-grade agricultural schools and of technical schools all over the country was also needed. But they would never get any of these things until public opinion sanctioned and obliged such a system. If the country were to wake up to the danger of our

present position, then, and not till then, would a satisfactory system of agricultural education be established.

MONDAY, December 12.—The Admirals published a proclamation to the Cretans announcing the establishment of the new *régime* and the terms of Prince George's appointment as High Commissioner, and adding that the arrival of the Prince would end their mission.

The *Liberté* published an article in which, after observing that for twenty-seven years French public opinion had been convinced that France had but a single enemy, and that all her efforts had been concentrated on the Eastern frontier, the writer said that suddenly it was found that a mistake had been made, and that France had not merely rivals but irreconcilable foes in London. The result had been a movement of opinion in favour of a reconciliation with Germany, which had had an echo in the latter country. The article concluded: "This is how, because five or six French officers went to plant the French flag on the Upper Nile, the whole face of European politics will be, perhaps, radically modified."

A demonstration against Colonel Picquart and in honour of the army took place in Paris. A party of about 150 persons, led by M. Millevoye and two other Deputies, visited the Cherche-Midi Prison and the Invalides, indulging in various cries. In the Chamber there was a stormy scene, arising out of an interpellation by a Socialist Deputy who accused the General Staff of the army of "indiscretions," and proceeded, amid continual disorder, to quote newspaper articles bringing various foreign Sovereigns and Governments into the Dreyfus affair.

In the Reichstag in Berlin, Herr vow Bülow, the Imperial Foreign Secretary, said that there was a great variety of points on which Germany could and did gladly go together with England, without prejudicing her other valuable connexions.

TUESDAY, December 13.—Colonel Picquart still remained in prison. General Zurlinden repudiated all authority to set him free, and the Minister of War was equally unwilling to take any responsibility in the matter.

Mr. Courtney, M.P., delivered an address on "An Experiment in Commercial Expansion"—a review of the experience of the Congo Free State.

WEDNESDAY, December 14.—The newspapers published a letter, dated December 8, in which Sir William Harcourt, writing to Mr. John Morley, notified his conditional retirement from the leadership of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. "I am not," Sir William wrote, "and I shall not consent to be a candidate for any contested position. I will be no party to such a degradation in the tone of public life in this country. I have been content to the best of my ability, in any situation which fell to my lot, to do my duty towards the party which it has been my pride and my pleasure to serve. If I have arrived at the conclusion that I can best discharge that duty in an independent position in the House of Commons, you will, I feel sure, agree that a disputed leadership beset by distracted sections and conflicting interests is an impossible situation, and a release from vain and onerous obligations will come to me as a welcome relief." Mr. John Morley in his reply, dated December 10, wrote: "I cannot feel the smallest surprise that at last you have found it impossible to keep silence in a situation that may well have become intolerable to you."

MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI IN LANCASHIRE.

MEETING AT STRETFORD.

[FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

On Monday evening (December 12) Mr. Naoroji attended a social meeting in the Town Hall, Stretford, near Manchester, in connexion with the Stretford Division Liberal Association. He had a very cordial reception. Addressing the meeting,

Mr. NAOROJI said the Chairman (Mr. Stanion) had been good enough to refer to his adhesion to Liberal principles; but he had come to appeal to them that evening not as Liberals, or as belonging to any party, but as British men and women—and especially as Lancashire men and women—on behalf of India. (Hear, hear.) He had often said, and had been laughed at for saying it, that there was no question of politics, home or foreign, to be compared in importance with the question of India. Now, as by the irony of fate, the man who was to guide the destinies of India for the next five years had accepted that very proposition. He lately said, if this empire lost any other part of its dominions it would survive, but that if we lost India the sun of our empire would set. Those were true words. They had in India a population of 300,000,000, who claimed a civilisation of thousands of years—now unhappily to a certain extent deteriorated—and it was that country which made the British Empire the most glorious in the world's history. Let England lose that and she lost all. (Hear, hear.) He emphasised the importance of clearly understanding the relations of England and India. Without a knowledge of those relations as they actually existed, and not as mere romance, we should never be able to understand the problem before us. Lord Curzon said: "We administer the Government of that country in the interests of the governed; our mission there is one of obligation and not of profit." That, unfortunately, expressed the mere sentiment of hundreds of Anglo-Indian officials. The English people had been led to believe that India was governed for India's good only, and as Lord Curzon said, "not for profit." What were the facts? The Viceroy of India drew his £25,000 yearly from the Indian Treasury; the British Government inflicted upon the country a European service which took from it 200 millions of rupees annually for salaries and pensions, the greater part of which was not expended in the country but was brought to England. That, at any rate, was not beneficence. The idea that Englishmen went to India at great personal sacrifice and not to make a profit must be abandoned. He did not mean to say that no profit was to be expected from India; only let it not be put forward that England's mission was one of obligation only. India would not grudge England any profit she might honestly make, but the question was, "Have you performed your obligations?" He maintained that England's obligations had not been performed. England had given the most solemn pledges again and again, none of which had been carried out. Not that the British people were averse from carrying out those pledges; for they had laid down the true policy which should be pursued. It was their servants, the governments and their officials who had failed in their duty, as he should be able to prove from their own words. Early in this century it was laid down by Parliament that India was to be governed on the righteous principle of making no distinction whatever with regard to colour, creed or caste; every British-Indian subject was to be treated exactly as Englishmen were treated. (Cheers.) That was a right policy, and Lord Macaulay said that any mistake in carrying out that policy must bring disaster upon the British rule; if, however, the principles laid down by Parliament were honourably carried out, the glory of having raised a degraded nation to the level of civilisation would be all their own. What more could the Indian people desire? The promise was that they should be treated as British subjects were treated, and not—as they actually were—like helots. Was it carried out? The promise was mere romance; the principle was never observed. When the East India Company's charter was renewed in 1853, John Bright—whose name would ever live in the hearts of his Indian fellow-countrymen—struggled hard to ensure some effect being given to the Act of 1833, which laid down that principle of equal rights. But he struggled in vain. Then, in 1858, the Government of India was transferred to the Crown. Still, however, no difference was made in the administration of this country and the Act remained a dead letter. What had been the consequence? The consequence had been the impoverishment of the Indian people. Famines and pestilences were their lot. Now, Englishmen must ask themselves, was that to remain the result of British rule? The British people must get rid of the romance that they were governing India solely for India's good. They had been deluded and deceived—and this he said deliberately—as to the real condition of India. But there had been men, even amongst Anglo-Indians and Ministers of State, who had expressed their views on this subject very candidly. Sir John Lawrence, for example, thirty years ago, declared that the mass of the people of India were maintaining only a scanty subsistence. And had they not an object lesson before them year after year in the millions underfed, and when a single drought came millions carried off by famine? (Hear, hear.) Having denounced in strong terms the theory that India must be "bled," and pointed out the system on which it was carried out—a system of political hypocrisy—Mr. Naoroji asked pointedly what was the duty of the British people towards India? He believed from his long and intimate knowledge of the British people that they wished India should be governed on principles of justice and of honour. (Hear, hear.) But up to the present time their servants in India had ignored those principles. They had broken the word of honour of this country as expressed in Acts of Parliament and Royal Proclamations in every possible way. Until now the people of England had been led to believe that the pledges made before the world, which they had called God to witness, were being fulfilled. He did not ask the meeting to take this on his word alone; he wanted them to test his words with the help of the authorities he would give them, and with the object lesson of which he had spoken before their eyes. John Bright said: "There are two ways by which you can govern India—the first is by trading with India; the second is by plunder." What was now done was the latter. The Indian people therefore appealed to the British nation to see that their servants in India acted upon the principles of righteousness and justice which the British people had said should guide them. If they failed the fault would be theirs. He asked them not to be carried away by the idea fostered by Anglo-Indians, who said, "We have conquered India by the sword and must keep it by the sword." That was utter nonsense. They had never conquered India by the sword. It was not so much English blood as Indian blood that had conquered India for England. In all the battles by which we became masters of India the larger part of the army fighting under the English flag was composed of natives of India. It was Indian blood which had contributed largely to form this mighty British Empire. England had derived her strength and much of her wealth also from India, and they had heard on what principles Anglo-Indians insisted India should be governed—that she was to be "bled," and that the system of bleeding must be carried on by political hypocrisy. He urged this point the more strongly in order that the British people might realise what their duty was in the matter. (Hear, hear.) Let principles of righteousness and justice prevail and England need have no fear that India's connexion with her would ever be broken. (Cheers.) But this was not to be expected so long as Indian administrators were doing everything they could to bring about disaster, the English people being all the while under a sort of mesmeric spell, believing that all was right. They must wake up and probe this matter to the bottom, understand the reality of India's constitution, and apply the remedy. Their mission in India—different from that of former empires—was to civilise the people, redeem them from their poverty, and make them blessed and prosperous. (Cheers.) He did not deny the right of England to derive profit from India. Only he insisted that the profit must be mutual. Let righteous principles be adopted and England would profit ten times more than she did at present. (Hear, hear.) Lancashire people complained that India did not take more of the goods they produced. The total exports to India from Great Britain and Ireland did not exceed 1s. 6d. per head of the population of India. This

would speedily be changed if right principles of government could be ensured. It could not be changed, however, so long as the impoverishment of the people continued. Only make it possible for the 250 or 300 millions of India to take £1 per head of British products, and it would be out of the power of England to supply the demand which would arise. In bringing his address to a close he would ask the audience to carry away and ponder over a few facts. The first was that India was not governed on British principles but on un-British and despotic principles, only for the benefit of a section of the British community. To put the thing in a concise form he would submit this proposition and ask them to give it their best consideration—whether the state of affairs existing in India should end? That it should end must commend itself to the mind of every average intelligent Englishman who would look at the matter calmly and disinterestedly. He appealed to the people of England to consider whether it was not a matter that was much to be deplored that the promises made to India were not faithfully and honourably kept. The true policy of the British people towards India had been laid down by Acts and resolutions of Parliament, by proclamations of the Sovereign, and repeated declarations and pledges of the Government. In India, however, that policy had been ignored and perverted, with the result that now India was afflicted with poverty and her people were decimated by plague and famine, whilst the growth of her trade with this country was seriously impeded. He appealed to them whether it was not unworthy of the British name to force on India the whole of the expenditure incurred for purposes in which the British people were interested equally with the people of India. The present Government distinctly admitted that the late war on the North-West frontier was an imperial concern—it was for the benefit both of England and India. It was the fear of a Russian invasion that induced the Government to inflict on India that war. In order to avoid controversy he would say that it was for the interest of both peoples, and he asked, therefore, should not England share with India the expenditure upon that war? But what did the Government do? It turned round and said: "Oh, India is quite able to pay everything." It was not with the Government a question of justice; it was a question of how much they could make India pay. Again he would ask was that worthy of the British character? He could not argue the matter at greater length, but the one illustration given served to show that in all the dealings of the Government with India, though the expenditure on frontier wars was incurred for interests common to both, the Indian taxpayer was made to bear the entire burden, whilst England derived practically all the benefit. (Cheers.) Lastly he would say the Government should be pressed by the British people to adopt measures to remedy the deplorable evils he had pointed out. They must fulfil their pledges. That was his whole appeal. Up to this time the British people had always been willing to treat their fellow subjects in India on principles of justice and honour. It was Governments and administrators who had prevented that policy; and he appealed to the British people, who were supreme, for their own sakes and for the sake of honour and justice, to compel their servants to carry out what was their declared will. By so doing they would benefit the peoples of both countries and would leave a mark on history which would be worthy of the English name. (Loud applause.)

The thanks of the meeting were cordially and unanimously voted to Mr. Naoroji for his address.

MR. R. C. DUTT IN LANCASHIRE.

A public meeting was held at Blackley Liberal Club, Manchester, on Monday last, December 12, to hear Mr. Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E., on Indian affairs. Alderman Stanley presided.

Mr. Dutt pointed out the great importance of the Indian empire to the United Kingdom, and said that however large and numerous England's colonies and dependencies might be, now or in the future, her greatness as an imperial and commercial Power would stand or fall with her possession of India. It was reasonable therefore that some portion of the feverish anxiety displayed by Englishmen at the present day in acquiring new possessions all over the world should be felt in maintaining that which England now possessed and the like of which she would never acquire again. Commenting on the recent acts of the Indian Government, Mr. Dutt argued that they were calculated to estrange and not to consolidate—they were likely to ruin and not to build up an empire. The frontier wars of 1878 and 1897 were needlessly and unwisely brought about by the acts of the Indian Government; and the famine of 1897, which was the sixth great famine within the last sixty years, was greatly intensified by the excessive land assessments which were continuously going on and which impoverished the agricultural population of India. Other measures equally unwise had produced disastrous results in estranging the educated people of India. The liberty of the Press which the people of India had enjoyed for fifty years and more had been taken away by recent "Sedition" Acts. Editors of newspapers had been prosecuted in panic and sent to gaol, and leading men had been kept in prison and in durance without a trial for over a year. In conclusion Mr. Dutt referred to the Bill now before the Bengal Council, which he said was calculated and intended to destroy the municipal self-government which the ratepayers of Calcutta had enjoyed for over 22 years. Calcutta had vastly improved under this system of self-government, but the city would be ruined if it was attempted to govern it through a body of men the majority of whom were not elected by the ratepayers. The empire of India was won by reposing trust and confidence in the people, and was not likely to be retained except by such trust and confidence. Mr. Dutt was repeatedly cheered.

On the following evening, December 13, Mr. Romesh Dutt addressed a public meeting at Heaton Park. Mr. F. W. Cawley, M.P., presided.

Mr. Dutt began his speech with a reference to recent transactions between the Nawab of Dir and the "mad" Mullah, and pointed out the folly of the Chitral policy of the present Government. Lord Rosebery, whom no one would accuse of being a little Englander, had after careful and prolonged deliberation passed orders to abandon Chitral, but the present Government came into power immediately afterwards, reversed Lord Rosebery's policy, and decided to retain Chitral, and thus brought on the frontier war of 1897. Their member, the Chairman, had laid down the just and proper maxim that if England found it necessary to carry on operations against Russia outside India, England should pay for those operations and not charge them to India. He (Mr. Dutt) assured them that if this maxim were acted upon they would not hear of frontier wars in the future, wars which were brought about by the mischievous activity of military men. Mr. Dutt then dwelt on the series of repressive measures and acts of the present Government in India, viz., the Sedition Acts gagging the Press of India, the prosecution of editors of newspapers, the confinement of two British subjects without charge and without trial, and lastly the contemplated withdrawal of the privileges of self-government from the citizens and ratepayers of Calcutta. He appealed to his hearers to raise their protest against these despotic and retrograde measures which weakened the foundations of the British Empire in India. When the time for voting next came round in the constituency, he begged them to ask themselves if they would vote for a Government which had gagged the Press of India, crushed municipal self-government, and kept in imprisonment without trial and without specific charges two leading and patriotic citizens of Bombay in a case which was more outrageous than the Dreyfus case. Mr. Dutt's speech was frequently cheered.

MR. BIPIN CHANDRA PAL AT CRICKLADE.

[From a Correspondent.]

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal on Monday last addressed a large meeting at the Congregational Chapel, Cricklade, on Indian Life and Thought. He said that India was a vast country, having an immense population speaking many languages, and in the most widely different stages of culture. But he would confine his remarks mainly to the life and thought of the Hindu populations of India, who formed about four-fifths of the total population. First he dwelt upon their physical life, how and what they ate and drank, in what houses they lived, and their principal physical occupations. The vast mass of the country were agriculturalists. There was a time when India had a large artisan class, but that was before the British went to that country, and when the products of the Indian looms adorned the richest and administered to the luxurious classes in Europe. But British competition had killed those ancient industries, and practically had thrown the entire mass of the population on land. The strain was consequently very severe upon land, and there were parts of the country where they had so many as 800 souls for each square mile of cultivated area. This congestion of the agricultural population necessarily led to dire distress and chronic want. They heard reports of periodical famines in India. These periodical famines had been visiting the country almost with the recurring regularity of the seasons. Almost every ten years they had a tremendous famine which swept away countless thousands of the poor. But they did not hear anything of the almost continuous famine that reigned over large tracts of India. The Famine Commission of this year had discovered the fact that in parts of the Central Provinces there had been severe and continuous scarcity which might be called famine for three years previous to the outbreak of 1896-7. It did not require much to live in India. People generally had two meals only a day, and the field labourers only had three. They were all a remarkably abstemious people. They did not destroy the quantity of meat that Englishmen devoured from day to day. Many people ate no meat at all, and those who did had it only occasionally. In certain parts they consumed a fairly large quantity of fish, but the vast majority lived on very simple fare that did not cost more than a penny a day. The people were not lazy. They had no vices. They had no public-houses in the villages except where they had been forced upon the people by an over-zealous Excise Administration. But though frugal and hard-working, though their land was fertile, though they themselves were free from all vicious habits that brought on poverty and destitution, the people were very poor. They often lived in houses which would be regarded as unfit even for a pig-stye here. They were not by nature a dirty people. The Hindu was perhaps in the matter of personal cleanliness the cleanest and certainly the most washed man under the sun. If he had to live in squalid houses it was due not to habit but purely to want of means. Where the peasant was a little better off his house was as clean as (to quote a Hindu saying) temple. His wife and the other female members of the family looked upon sweeping and scrubbing not as degradation and drudgery but as a sacred and pious duty. Proceeding to speak of the social life of the people, Mr. Pal said that domestic life was the very soul of social life, and woman was the very soul of domestic life. The Indian woman in the past held her own in the highest erudition with the men. They had very learned women in ancient India, women who held disputations with the highest doctors of divinity, who were teachers of mathematics, and who generally were for the times as educated as the most educated women of the present day in any country. But that was matter of ancient history. Under the centuries of Islam dominion that preceded the British rule Hindu civilisation had in some respects received a check. Female education and the high social position of woman were in many places almost entirely swept away. In places, however, where the Moslem influence was not so strong woman had always, and she had even to-day, as much freedom of movement as the women of this country had. But all over India the chief characteristic of female character was its intense, its lovely, its pious womanhood. The Indian woman was a mother. She lived for her children, and would always die for them. This all-absorbing maternal instinct was the corner-stone of

Indian domestic and social life. It was this which contributed to the purity, the strength, and the beauty of female character in India. There were social evils in India, as there were in England also, but the Indians were making strenuous efforts to remedy them. India practically had no political life at all. He had spoken of the poverty of the people. It was largely the result of unwise administration. It was due in many cases to rack-renting by the State, which was the landlord in India. Where as in Bengal they had a permanently settled land-revenue, the peasantry were much better off, but in districts under the direct management of the State there were periodical assessments, and at almost every new settlement the screw was tightened a bit. The people paid the taxes, but they had no voice in the expenditure of the public money. It was spent upon needless and costly wars. The main currency in India was silver, and many years ago ten rupees made £1. But the value of silver had gone down in relation to gold, and a rupee was now fifty per cent. below its original gold value. India had to pay a large sum of money to meet the home charges, and this had to be paid in sterling, which meant paying fifty per cent. more than she paid before. The officials said that, the rupee having gone down, they could not send as much money home to England as they used to send. Their pay was fixed in rupees, and they had no just claim to a sterling payment. But they wanted compensation, as they said, for the lowering of the value of the rupee, and as the people had no voice in the matter, they began to take for their pay more than what had been originally bargained for. The speaker next referred to the National Congress, and how the legislative councils had been expanded a little recently. But the chief complaint still remained, namely, Indians had no control over the expenditure of the Government.

THE BILL TO DESTROY SELF-GOVERNMENT IN CALCUTTA.

I.—STATEMENT BY THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

The following Statement, dated Calcutta, November 12, 1898, has been forwarded by the Assistant-Secretary of the Indian Association to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Municipal Department:—

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1838 M., Municipal, dated Calcutta, March 25, 1898, calling for an expression of opinion from the Indian Association upon the Calcutta Municipal Bill and to observe as follows in reply:—

The constitutional part of the Bill is undoubtedly the most important, and one in which the most serious departure from the present law is observable. The fundamental changes which this part of the Bill introduces are sought to be justified on the ground that the Municipal Executive is weak. The distinguished men who from time to time have held the office of chairman, men like Sir Henry Harrison, Mr. Cotton and Mr. Beverly, never complained of the weakness of their position. Nobody was more thoroughly conversant with the strength and the weakness of the municipal system than the late Sir Henry Harrison, and if he at all thought that his position as chairman of the Corporation needed strengthening, nothing could have been easier for him than to have amended the law to that effect in 1888. He borrowed largely from the Bombay Municipal Act, but he kept intact the constitution of the Corporation as it had been framed by the law of 1876. It is true that in the course of the debate on the Municipal Bill he described the Commissioners as representing the brake-power of the Corporation, but it is to be borne in mind that he made that observation in support of the present constitution of the Corporation and in opposition to a motion made by Babu Kalinath Mitter to raise the proportion of elected members from two-thirds to three-fourths. He then observed that Babu Kalinath Mitter's amendment would clog the administrative machinery by adding to the brake-power, which he however thought was very necessary, by raising the proportion of elected members. If the executive is weak, the Committee have no hesitation in saying that it is due much more to the *personnel* than to the system, and that nothing better than a weak executive is to be expected when the head of the executive is frequently changed, for since 1889 there have been no less than six chairmen of the Corporation. Surely it is most unreasonable to condemn a system for faults for which it is in no way responsible—the appointment of chairman being made by the Government. If the executive is weak to the verge of helplessness or to such an extent as seriously to interfere with the work of the Corporation, the Committee would beg respectfully to enquire how came it about that under the municipal system which it is now proposed to supersede, great and permanent works of sanitation have been constructed which have changed the face of Calcutta and have converted it from a malaria-stricken swamp—a scandal to a civilised administration in the words of Sir John Strachey—to one of the healthiest cities of the Province. The fact affords conclusive evidence that when the executive is properly manned, it is fully equal to all the purposes of municipal government; and if the executive is weak, the remedy is not by enlarging its powers and making it absolutely irresponsible, but by appointing suitable men who will have something like a permanent interest in the office.

The Bill creates three co-ordinate authorities independent of each other and responsible to none for the proper performance of their duties, viz., the Chairman, the General Committee, and the Corporation. Nothing shows the revolutionary character of this Bill in a more striking character than the fact that the importance of these authorities under the Bill is in the inverse order of their importance under the existing law. Under the present law, the Corporation represents the supreme authority. Under the Bill it is the least important of the three authorities. Under the present law, the authority of the chairman is controlled by the General Committee in regard to all financial questions and is subject to the revisional jurisdiction of the Corporation in all cases. Under the Bill the chairman is the most important authority, independent of the Corporation and of the General Committee in by far the most important part of his functions, for the exercise of which indeed he is responsible to none. How an administrative machinery would work under these conditions remains to be seen. In the opinion of the Committee of the Indian Association, the Bill will be unworkable. As regards the constitution of the General Committee, four members out of twelve, as representing the elected commissioners and the general body of ratepayers, must be regarded as seriously disproportionate to the enormous interests represented by the ratepayers and the residents. The Committee fully recognise the importance of an adequate representation of the European element on the Corporation and of the part which European merchants have had in the making of Calcutta. But, in any case, justice demands that the representation of a community should be proportionate to their financial stake. It has been shown in the memorial presented by the ratepayers of Calcutta in public meeting assembled that the Hindus and Mahometans between them hold the bulk of assessable property in the town and pay the bulk of the rates, and yet under the Bill it is proposed to give them the minimum of representation in what will form the cabinet of the Corporation. The Committee further object to the reduction of the number of the General Committee from eighteen to twelve. No inconvenience has been felt owing to the number being fixed at eighteen, while it has secured a more adequate representation of all interests and has created a more diffused interest in the working of the Corporation. The Committee are also strongly opposed to the creation of the proposed electoral divisions—four in number—for electing members for the General Committee. With the restricted representation on the General Committee provided in the Bill, it is a matter of the first importance that the best men should be elected. But the electoral divisions based on territorial considerations would infallibly lead to the election of purely local men to the exclusion of those who may be really more qualified. If there are two or three of the best men in the same ward or in the same group of wards forming an electoral division, they cannot all be elected, while as compared to them men less qualified and therefore less able to represent the interests of the town would be on the General Committee. The interests of the town would suffer and the purposes of municipal government would be so far defeated.

Having regard to these considerations, the Committee desire to record their respectful but emphatic protest against the grave constitutional changes proposed by the Bill. For these changes no case has been made out. The great need of Calcutta is structural improvement, and for structural improvement funds and not laws are needed. The Bill makes no provision for additional funds, but introduces elaborate constitutional changes upon the model of a municipal system which is altogether new to the people of Calcutta, and which is foreign to those ideas and habits of thought which by long familiarity their own system of municipal government has firmly implanted in their minds. The Committee have every sympathy with all reasonable proposals for sanitary improvement, but they are fully persuaded that the present Bill will retard rather than promote the ends of sanitation, for it has roused the active opposition of the people of Calcutta, and the sanitarian to be successful must carry the people with them. In the words of Sir Ashley Eden, "to make sanitation efficient in Calcutta the people of the city must be led, and not driven, into co-operation with the Sanitary Department. Dr. Payne should bear in mind that one case in which Native society is induced by conviction to adopt a sanitary theory is worth hundreds of cases in which they are pressed into submitting to reforms of the benefits of which they are not satisfied. The Sanitary Officer must remember that the principles and theories which to him seem so obvious and so indisputable have not even yet received practical acceptation in many countries in a much more advanced condition of social progress than India, and that more is to be gained by patiently and gently endeavouring to establish the soundness of these theories by practical results than by hard language in respect of those who are not prepared to accept at once the conclusions at which he may have arrived after many years of hard study of the whole subject. In some of the finest cities in civilised Europe, with every appliance and convenience for sanitary improvement available, there are streets, lanes and houses whose description, if faithfully given, would throw into the shade the vivid pictures of the filth of Calcutta so graphically drawn by Dr. Payne."

II.—LETTER FROM MR. ROMESH DUTT.

The following letter to the editor appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* of December 9:—

Sir,—You were so good as to permit me a few weeks ago to

describe in your columns the good work which has been done in India in the past by reposing trust and confidence in the people and by conceding to them a share in the municipal administration of their towns. I pointed out that under the wise administration of Lord Northbrook twenty-two years ago the ratepayers of Calcutta were empowered to elect the majority of their municipal commissioners, and that these elected commissioners have, according to the testimony of successive rulers of Bengal, worked with honesty, efficiency, and zeal, and have so improved Calcutta that it is now one of the healthiest spots in Bengal. Permit me to-day to add to this the testimony of Sir John Woodburn, the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The papers received from India by the last mail contain full reports of his speech in the Bengal Legislative Council, in which he spoke thus of the Calcutta Corporation under its present popular constitution:—

> They are entitled to all the credit—and it is a high one—of realising the value and necessity of the great schemes which have been drawn up for their approval, such as those for the drainage of the city and the construction of the Harrison Road. They have not shrunk from the heavy taxation which was needed to bring these beneficent projects into effect, and I have myself had evidence of the high public spirit and laborious circumspection which many members of the Corporation bring to the discharge of their municipal duties. These are qualities which not in Calcutta alone have elicited my respect, and it is a pleasure to me to have this opportunity of acknowledging them.

Further on Sir John Woodburn says:—

> I look upon it as of the greatest value to the administration of the city that there should be numerous wards and numerous delegates. The information and advice about local needs which these delegates bring will be of most important service. There could be no more excellent illustration than in the assistance they gave last hot weather in calming the fears of the people and establishing temporary [plague] hospitals, which were the best means of reassuring them.

One would scarcely imagine, after perusal of these passages, that these elected commissioners of Calcutta—who have worked so zealously and honestly and efficiently in the past, who have changed Calcutta from an insanitary into a healthy city, and who have faced the approach of the plague with courage, firmness, and public spirit—are about to be deprived of those executive powers which they have used so well.

The eagle that was shot by the arrow feathered with its own plume had no greater reason for the lament than the public men of Calcutta who have worked zealously only to smooth the path towards their own political death. And wherefore this retrograde policy, this immolation of self-government in India? To be strictly accurate, let me quote once more Sir John Woodburn's words:—

> They [the elected representatives of the ratepayers] lose the predominance they have been accustomed to, and we part with annoyance with anything to which we have been habituated. The change, moreover, does convey a slight. In all these feelings they have the sympathy of all of us. Had they been indolent, negligent, false to their duty, they could have had no sympathy. Their virtues have indeed been their vices, and their excess of zeal has paralysed their agents.

I do not wish to dispute the fact pointed out by Sir John Woodburn in the last sentence quoted, for my own opinion would have small weight against the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Granting that the excess of zeal of municipal delegates "has paralysed their agents"—*i.e.* weakened their Executive Committee—surely it is possible for the wisdom of the Government to rectify this and to strengthen the Executive Committee without virtually reducing the delegates to nonentities. In Bombay the delegates are empowered to choose two-thirds of the members of the Executive Committee; in Calcutta it is proposed by the present Bill that the delegates should choose only one-third of the members of the Executive Committee. This virtually means that the governing executive body would not represent the delegates, and would not therefore represent the wishes and opinions of the ratepayers. Is this an object which should be aimed at, even in India? Generations of English statesmen and administrators have laboured in England and in India to evoke that "high public spirit" which Sir John Woodburn commends so much, but which it is now intended to crush and stamp out with a light heart and a despotic hand. Macaulay and Bentinck, Munro and Elphinstone, Canning and Northbrook, Ripon and Gladstone—all have laboured to spread English education, to create public spirit, and to bring self-governing institutions into existence in India. And when a small and humble and successful beginning has been made, will Englishmen look at the fruit of their labours with distrust and suspicion, and will Lord George Hamilton root out the sapling which has taken three generations to grow?

The death of self-government will be the death of good administration in India. You cannot govern India well except with the co-operation of the people; you cannot secure their co-operation without trusting them with some powers. Real improvements in a city of 860,000 souls will be impossible in the future after you have withdrawn your trust from the people; and should plague or famine or cholera epidemics desolate the metropolis of India at any future time, the rulers of the land will seek in vain for "high public spirit" in the people when earnest and hard-working men have been sent adrift with "slight" and insult and contumely after twenty-two years of honest, efficient, and zealous work. But more than this—you cannot wrench away the rights which the people of India have secured and enjoyed under British rule without creating a feeling of despair, disappointment, and discontent. I hear every mail from my friends in India, and I cannot describe to you the feeling of alarm which the Municipal Bill now before the Bengal Legislative Council has caused in Calcutta and outside Calcutta. Families who have been distinguished for their loyalty to the British power since the days of Clive and Hastings have been filled with disappointment and despair; leaders of men who have been the strongest supporters of Government measures are asking themselves if the Government is receding now from the policy of the last seventy years and adopting one of distrust and despotism. India cannot be ruled with distrust; fair words and expressions of sympathy are felt as mere mockery when accompanied by the withdrawal of political rights; and the discontent of the present generation is the seed of political dangers in the next. As a retired servant of the Indian Government who has faithfully and humbly served his countrymen and the British Power during the best years of his life, I appeal to you and to all thoughtful Englishmen not to undo the good work done in the past, and not to weaken, by an unwise distrust in the people and by retrograde legislation, the ties which bind India to England. The Calcutta Municipal Bill, if passed in its present shape, will create a lasting and silent discontent in the hearts of the nation, and will be hurtful to India and to her rulers.

Yours, etc.,

December 7, 1898. ROMESH DUTT

(*Late of the Indian Civil Service*).

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

Six meetings in Lancashire on Indian affairs have been addressed this week by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji (December 12, Stretferd; 13, Oldham; 14, Failsworth; 15, Rossendale) and Mr. Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E. (December 12, Blackley; 13, Heaton Park.)

Elsewhere in the present issue of INDIA will be found reports of Mr. Naoroji's meeting at Stretford and Mr. Dutt's meetings at Blackley and Heaton Park.

A report is also given of an address delivered by Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal at Cricklade on December 12.

On December 6 Miss Alison Garland addressed a meeting on behalf of the British Committee at the Liberal Club, Low Moor, on "How England can improve the condition of the Indian people." There was a large attendance and an interesting and lively discussion.

On December 7 the annual meeting of the Women's Liberal Association was held at the Liberal Hall, presided over by Mrs. Rayner, when a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee delivered an address on "The Industrial Condition of the Indian people," which was much appreciated by the Stockport Liberals.

On December 8 Miss Alison Garland addressed a well attended meeting on behalf of the British Committee at the Liberal Club, Milnsbridge, on "Some Liberal Reforms for India." Mr. Lawson presided. Many took part in the discussion. The mover of the vote of thanks said that the lecturer was doing a grand work in enlightening the English people on the method of British rule in India. Englishmen wished to accord to Indians a full measure of liberty and justice, and when once their sympathy was aroused Sedition Acts and other repressive measures would be revoked.

On December 9 Miss Alison Garland addressed a crowded meeting on behalf of the British Committee at Outlave Liberal Club. Mr. Saville, the president, took the chair. At the close of her address a working man came up to the lecturer and said "Go about and tell these things to the people. Oppression would cease in India if *we* had our way; but we are ignorant and want teaching."

On December 10 the annual meeting of the Colne Women's Liberal Association was held at the Liberal Club. Alderman Catlow presided over a large attendance. A lecturer on behalf of the British Committee gave an address on "India and Its People." In subsequent addresses local manufacturers endorsed the view stated by the lecturer that instead of seeking new markets in uncivilised parts of the globe, Englishmen should develop those they had by policy calculated to increase the prosperity of our fellow subjects in India.

During the next few days not many political meetings will be held on account of the approach of Christmas. A considerable number of meetings on Indian questions has, however, been arranged for the New Year.

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